

H. W. Rankin. Nov. 86.

IS CHRISTIANITY OF GOD?

DID CHRIST RISE AGAIN?

BY

GEO. BOWEN,
MISSIONARY, BOMBAY.

Bombay:

PRINTED FOR THE

BOMBAY TRACT AND BOOK SOCIETY.

1881.

IS CHRISTIANITY OF GOD?

DID CHRIST RISE AGAIN?

BY

GEO. BOWEN,
MISSIONARY, BOMBAY.

Bombay :

PRINTED FOR THE

BOMBAY TRACT AND BOOK SOCIETY.

1881.

IS CHRISTIANITY OF GOD?

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
SECTION A.—IMPARTIAL SCRUTINY NEEDED	1
B.—ARGUMENT STATED	5
C.—CHRIST FOR ALL NATIONS AND ALL AGES	9
D.—PROPHESED AS SUCH.	12
E.—MAKING PEACE BETWEEN GOD AND MAN	14
F.—CHRIST'S CAUSE DIED WITH HIM	19
G.—DIED TO RISE AGAIN	22
H.—EFFECT OF HIS DEATH ON HIS DISCIPLES.	26
I.—HIS RESURRECTION, THAT OF HIS CAUSE	30
J.—MORE THAN LIFE FROM THE DEAD	35
K.—PENTECOST A RESULT OF THE RESURRECTION	39
L.—TARRYING FOR ENDUEMENT	43
M.—NO RESURRECTION, NO GOSPEL	46
N.—SOCIETY REVOLUTIONIZED BY THE RISEN CHRIST. .	48

IS CHRISTIANITY OF GOD?

DID CHRIST RISE AGAIN ?

SECTION A.

IF Christ rose again, Christianity is of God ; if Christ rose not again, Christianity is not true. Many of the teachings of Jesus Christ may be true ; but Christianity in the sense of a system of salvation, a means of reconciliation with God, is not true, if Christ rose not again. " If Christ be not risen from the dead, your faith is vain," said the Apostle Paul. So clearly has this been perceived, that those who have, like Strauss, set themselves determinately to overthrow the faith of Christians, have felt it sufficient to devote themselves mainly to the question of Christ's resurrection. There are many in this country who are willing to give a measure of enquiry to the subject of the divine origin of Christianity, and who perhaps are more in the way of becoming acquainted with the attacks made upon the Gospel, than with the evidences of its truth. We should be very glad indeed to assist any such to a right apprehension of the facts of the case. We do not know that we have anything to say on the subject that has not been said by others, and well said. Admirable and sufficient answers to Strauss and other opponents have been supplied ; but somehow or other these books do not often find their way to those who most need them ; and it is possible that some may take notice of an unpretending pamphlet like this who would never read the more solid literature relating to this subject.

Many fancy that there is no demonstration possible of either the truth or falsity of the Gospel, and that it is accordingly superfluous for them to spend any time in studying the question, and so by a short and easy cut, they reach the conclusion that they will avail themselves of that which is obviously true in the teaching of Christ, and let the rest go. This is a very plausible position, and it commends itself to many persons of a philosophic turn of mind. But we would ask such persons to consider if their belief that there is no sufficient proof of the divine origin of Christianity, rests upon any satisfactory basis. Do they not owe it to themselves and to the truth and to Christ, that they should ascertain by actual investigation, that there is no adequate proof of the Gospel's being from God? Suppose the case of one who came as an ambassador from one king to another bearing a proposal of marriage between the son of the one and the daughter of the other. The latter receives the envoy and has a long conversation with him; but paying no attention to what is said about the proposed marriage, he asks a great many questions about the countries through which the envoy has passed on the way to his dominions. And so, in all successive audiences; all references to the marriage are turned aside with a smile or a jest, and the time is spent in talking about the various objects of interest seen by the envoy during his journey. At length the envoy says, 'Sire, I have come in the capacity of an ambassador and only in that capacity have I any claim to appear before you; I bear credentials from my master to which I humbly crave your attention; permit me to execute the commission which has been entrusted to me, and let me know what answer I am to bear to my sovereign.' The king makes answer as before, 'I am by no means certain that you have been deputed to come to me by your king, and I do not think it worth while to look at what you call your credentials; but I find

your society agreeable and instructive, and so if you please we will continue to talk about matters in general.' What ambassador could regard such an answer as anything but an insult to himself and his sovereign? Now Christ claims to be not one of the teachers of men; but the Saviour of mankind; not a light in the world, but the Light of the World; the Bread of Life which came down from heaven to give life unto the world. If his credentials are not adequate, then we cannot receive him; but let us not withhold the scrutiny necessary to determine whether they be adequate or not. The ground of the major part of the skepticism existing relatively to the Bible, is not the inadequacy of the testimony, but the simple fact that *certain persons* think it inadequate. Their opinion is accepted, without any proof that it has been honestly reached. Almost everybody can perceive that the Bible lays obligations upon those who receive it, and every one is conscious of a disinclination to admit these obligations, so that there is a foregone reason in the individual himself, not in the Scriptures, why he should not recognize their claims upon him. The king, in conversation with the ambassador, might receive or neglect the statements of the latter, according as he was inclined. But if he had a depreciatory idea of the other king, reckoning him far below himself in dignity and power, there would be no disposition to hear about the proposals of marriage. When the Queen of Sheba heard of the wealth and splendour and power of Solomon, she might have treated the tales with contempt, and scouted the representations as reflecting on her own greatness; but instead of that she resolved to repair in person to the court of Solomon and see for herself. Oh that there were such a spirit among the educated young men of this country. They recognize the obligation to prove all things with the single exception of the Bible. And what perhaps, more than anything else, tends to make them ill-disposed to institute an impartial en-

quiry, is the idea that it would be another concession to the greatness of the dominant race. But this is a great mistake. They can see for themselves that the European officials care in general very little for native Christians, and for the spread of Christianity in this country. If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his, says the Bible; true Christians are led by the spirit of Christ, one of the chief characteristics of which is humility. All that which is offensive ordinarily to the Natives in the conduct of Europeans, is due to the fact that they have not the spirit of Christ. We have no objection to your rejecting that sort of Christianity, but what we ask is that you should not allow the matter to be prejudged because of the pride and self-sufficiency that may appear in the lives of many Europeans. The people of God, in any land, are but the aristocracy of heaven, little thought of by men, but having power with God. The pride that offends you in certain Englishmen is that which hinders them from receiving the Gospel in their hearts. Both you and they need to be on your guard against this great enemy of God, human pride. An honest man wishes above all to be in a state of reconciliation with his heavenly Father. They who are in possession of power in any land, whether in Europe or Asia, are tempted to pride. How was it with those who had power in this land before the advent of the English? How was it with the Brahmins when they were in the ascendancy? How with the Mussalmans? How is it with the Mandarins of China? The pride that offends you in Englishmen is just the pride of human nature wherever it is invested with power, without the benignant influences of Christianity.

There is also a feeling among the educated Natives that they must cleave to one another in order that they may fight successfully their political battles. They look upon

the stream of foreign influence as devastating, and threatening ruin to the country ; and they imagine that their only hope is in such close combination among themselves as shall present an impenetrable embankment. But is not this just another form of caste ? and has not caste always been a curse to this country ? The real problem is this, how to neutralize anything unfavourable that there may be in this stream of foreign influence, and promote by means of it the fertilization of the land. The reason why the country has not more benefited by the dominion of the British, is possibly because that which is best among all the gifts of the West, the Gospel of our Lord Jesus, they have not been willing to receive. We would therefore entreat those under whose eye this series of papers may fall, to read them carefully and dispassionately and prayerfully ; and also endeavour to bring them to the notice of others who may not have given much attention to the subject of the evidences of Christianity.

SECTION B.

WE repeat ; If Christ rose again, Christianity is of God ; if he rose not, Christianity, as a system of salvation for mankind, is not true. There are two conceptions of Christ. One recognizes him as a teacher come from God, shedding clearer light than any one else has done on man's obligations, on the nature of true obedience and faith, on the relation of this world to the next, and especially conferring a great benefit on mankind by doing away with the walls of partition between Judaism and mankind generally. Among those who hold this view there are differences of opinion. But the tendency of the system is to minimize the supernatural and account for all that was accomplished by Christ, by the superiority of his moral and intellectual powers.

The other conception is that Christ is the revelation of God in humanity for the express purpose of effecting the recovery of man by means of a sacrifice that should enable God, without any impeachment of his perfections or of his law, to extend pardon and eternal life to all who might believe on Christ ; such a revelation also as is fitted to inspire sinners, conscious of the burden of their sins, with confidence in him as Atoner and Mediator. According to the first conception man simply needs to be aided in the work of getting right with God. According to the second conception, Christ is the Alpha and Omega of redemption ; the bread of life that came down from heaven to give life unto the world. With the former conception we have here nothing to do ; for it is simply a makeshift of those who have rejected the positive claims of the Gospel, and who treat this as a wreck out of which they hope to save some valuables. We plead for the Gospel in its integrity, and undertake to show the truth of the following propositions :—

1. Christ is not one in a succession of prophets, but the One to whom all the prophets testify.
2. His mission had ultimate reference, not to one nation, but to all nations, not to one age, but to all ages.
3. He came to save the world by restoring harmony between God and sinners.
4. All through his earthly ministry he contemplated his own death as a necessary means of accomplishing salvation for mankind.
5. But death is the extinction of personal influence and power as regards this world, and this would be pre-eminently true in the case of Jesus Christ : his death would indeed be the annihilation of his cause.

6. But Christ always connected with his death resurrection, in terms that imply that all the work of his life would be nullified without it ; making the hope of eternal life to be buried with him and resurgent with him.

7. As a matter of fact, when Christ died, his personal influence and power died with him, and those who had been in closest attendance upon him all through his ministry, were left utterly and hopelessly incapable as regards the Christianizing of men.

8. The resurrection of Christ was to them life from the dead, and life in a fuller, higher, more potent sense than they had ever dreamed of.

9. As the ascension of Christ depended on his resurrection, so the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost and thenceforward, depended on his ascension.

10. Without the physical, visible resurrection of Christ, there could have been no Christian church in Jerusalem, no evangelization of the nations, no Acts of the Apostles, and no Epistles to the Churches planted by them.

We need not spend much time in proving the first proposition, that Christ was not one in a succession of prophets, but the One to whom they testify as the Messiah, the Anointed One, *par excellence*. It is not denied that the Old Testament announces a Messiah, the Son of God, to be invested with supreme authority in the kingdom of God. The advent of this Messiah was to be preceded by that of a forerunner ; and John the Baptist was recognized by the Jewish nation as the predicted forerunner. John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness, obtained an unrivalled popularity. All Judea, *i. e.* people of all classes in immense multitude, flocked from all parts of the country to the place

where he had established himself, and were baptized by him as a profession of their purpose to receive and obey the greater One that was to be introduced by him. In this way the whole nation of the Jews solemnly set forth their conviction that the time had come for the advent of the Messiah, and that John was his inspired forerunner, and they bound themselves to receive Him who was to be thus introduced to them. Jesus was then made known to John as the Messiah, by the voice from heaven, and the descent of the Holy Spirit, and was by him announced as "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." This language, more significant perhaps than John himself was aware of, not only defined the object of Christ's mission, viz. the removal of sin as the barrier between the sinner and God, and the accomplishment of a salvation available for all mankind, Gentiles as well as Jews, but intimated that it was through suffering and sacrifice he would secure these results. On a certain occasion Jesus said to a body of Pharisees who met him at Jerusalem, What think ye of Christ? What is your idea of the Messiah? Whose son is he? They replied, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit (under inspiration) call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand. David was prophet and king, but he recognized the Christ as his Lord, invested with that universal power that belongs to the right hand of God. Christ referred to John the Baptist as more than a prophet, inasmuch as he was the precursor of the Messiah; and on another occasion said, "The law and the prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." The writer of the Hebrews, with evident reference to what is said in Ps. ii., Ps. ix., and other parts of the Old Testament, says: God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the pro-

phets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds ;—being made so much better than the angels.” The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. A Jew, speaking in the presence of Jews, said, “To him give all the prophets witness that through his name whosoever believeth on him shall receive remission of sins.” Being the Christ he was *officially* pre-eminent and not merely as respects the excellence of his teaching, the purity of his example, or the strength of his love to humanity. In these he was indeed pre-eminent ; but more than this was implied in the language of Daniel, five centuries earlier, “One like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before them, and there was given him dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve him.”

SECTION C.

OUR second proposition is that Christ's mission *had* ultimate *reference* not to one nation but *to all nations*, not to one age but *to all ages*.

They are constructing an immense bridge over the East river, New York, so high that it shall be no impediment to the largest ships. But long before they began the construction of the bridge proper, they were engaged in laying deep and broad, on the New York side, the foundations of the abutments ; and every intelligent person examining those foundations would have seen in them a most emphatic declaration of a purpose to construct such a bridge. He would have plainly seen that they could not have been intended for any other purpose.

The angel that appeared to the shepherds announcing the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem, said, "I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be *to all people*. Unto you is born a Saviour, Christ the Lord." When his parents presented him in the temple, Simeon, a devout man, publicly spoke of him as "a light *to lighten the Gentiles*." When Christ was baptized by John the Baptist, the latter bore this testimony, Behold the Lamb of God that *taketh away the sin of the world*. The tempter seems to have understood that this was the mission of Christ, for he offered him the kingdoms of the world. When Jesus entered upon his ministry at Nazareth, he preached to the people from Isaiah xlii. 1, and in making the application, appears to have turned away from the Jews to the Gentiles. For he dwells upon the fact that Elijah was sent to a widow in a Gentile country and made his home with her; and that another Gentile, Naaman the Syrian, came to Elisha. To the first part of his discourse the Nazarenes listened delightedly, wondering at his gracious words; but the latter part irritated them beyond measure, as it seemed to do away with the partition-wall between them and other nations, and in their wrath they sought to cast him down from the brow of the hill.

The name which he gave himself, Son of Man, conveyed a similar implication.

When the centurion, a Gentile, showed such strong faith in him, he called the special attention of the people to the fact, and said, Many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. His own personal ministry was confined to the Jewish people, and when he sent forth his disciples to itinerate in advance of him, he instructed them not to visit the Gentiles, but to confine their labours to the Jews. Until his ministry to the Jews had ended in their

rejection of him, and in his sacrificial death, the Gospel was to be offered to the Jews only. At the same time, he distinctly intimated that it was for all mankind. A great deal of his instruction is embodied in parables. In one of these he says: "The field is the world." Some of them have passages like this: "At the end of the world, the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just," implying a world-wide judgment. Look at his exposition of the miracle of the loaves, John vi., "I am the bread of heaven that came down from heaven to give life unto the world." His invitations are addressed to mankind. It is not, If any Jew thirst, let him come unto me, but, If any man thirst, let him come. And so all the way through. The Gospels do not need to be translated out of a Jewish phraseology into a universal dialect; they are already in that dialect. People of every clime, every tongue, every degree of culture find that in the Gospels which comes directly home to their susceptibilities and their needs. It is a 'whosoever' Gospel. The parable of the King who made a supper for his son, clearly prefigures the calling of the nations. This gospel of the kingdom—said Christ—shall be preached in all the world for a witness, and then shall the end come. Again, wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in all the world, there shall also this that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her. In Matt. xxv. we have a representation of the judgment that is to take place at the return of Christ in glory, and in this he speaks of himself as judging all nations, and the criterion by which they are condemned or acquitted is their treatment of his disciples, showing plainly that his disciples are found among all nations. "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me," said Jesus. Much more might be cited in the way of evidence, but we have cited enough to prove our position that Christ, all through his ministry, distinctly proposed the introduction of a world-wide system of salvation.

SECTION D.

WE have already treated of the second proposition, *that Christ's mission had ultimate reference not to one nation but to all, not to one age but to all*; we have proved it by statements made in the Gospels, especially by the plain declarations of Christ himself. Before going on, it may be well to buttress this position by pointing out that the very scriptures of the Old Testament which isolate the Jews from the rest of the world, declare that the work of the Messiah shall have reference to the world at large.

The promise made by God to Abraham recurs at once to every mind : "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." And the ancient Jews confidently expected that this promise would be fulfilled in and through the Messiah.

"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people (nations) be." Gen. 49 : 10. By Shiloh (*he to whom it is*) the ancient Jewish interpreters understood the Messiah. The sceptre was departing from Judah when Christ was on the earth; much of their power had been taken away; they could not condemn to death; but their laws were not abrogated; there was a blending and an overshadowing of their power by the Roman. At the latest moment of the fifteen centuries when the promise could be fulfilled, it was. To the promised One is to be the gathering of the nations.

In the second Psalm is a prophecy of the kingdom of the Messiah (the Anointed One) and its universal character is plainly intimated. "Ask of me and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance"; the nations were to be given him in answer to prayer. There is to be a season when his power should be in abeyance, and his doctrine be

declared, and men be invited to submit to him, and after that a time of judgment. In the 45th Psalm there is a clearer intimation of the way in which he is to take to him his great power, "because of truth and meekness and righteousness;" and in the 72nd Psalm these spiritual weapons are plainly shown. In the 22nd Psalm, after an account of the Messiah's sufferings and death, we see him living again, and the result of his redemption is thus expressed: "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee." In Isaiah xl. there is a prophecy of John the Precursor and of the spiritual highway thrown up for the Lord's messengers, and we are told that the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together. In Isaiah lxi., after the passage quoted by Jesus in the synagogue of Nazareth, occur these words: "And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people; all that see them shall acknowledge them that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed. The Lord will cause: righteousness and praise to spring forth before all nations." In Daniel vii. we see the Son of Man invested with universal dominion, and the saints of the most high God, the holy people of the Messiah, are represented as taking the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven. In Psalm cx. he is spoken of as a Priest *for ever*, after the order of Melchizedek, who was not a Jew, but a Priest with princely powers, recognized and honoured by different tribes and nations, including the Abrahamic. In Zechariah ix. 9 there is this prophecy, "Thy king cometh unto thee: he is just and having salvation; lowly and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." And then in the very next verse we have these words: "He shall speak peace unto the heathen, and his dominion shall be from sea to sea and from the river unto the ends of the earth." How, by carnal weapons? Nay: "I will cut off the chariot

from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle-bow shall be cut off." In Haggai ii. 7 we have : " I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come." In Isaiah xi. 10, we have this beautiful promise : " In that day there shall be a root of Jesse [Son of David yet Lord of David] which shall stand for an ensign of the people ; to it shall the Gentiles seek ; and his rest shall be glorious." See also xlii. 1.

These passages may suffice to show that the mission of the prophesied Messiah contemplated the spiritual good of all nations and the world-wide diffusion of the blessings purchased by Him. And what is specially noteworthy is that there was in all this a mystery and a problem that could not be solved under the old dispensation. For that dispensation was an elaborate endeavour to separate the Jewish nation from other nations by means of religious privileges exclusively theirs ; it was the building up of a partition-wall so high as to reach to heaven, and so strong that not even the overthrow and captivity and dispersion of the nation, and all the outrages received by them during many ages, have been able to overthrow it, in the minds of those who rejected the Messiah. Now what could the Jews make of these promises, which plainly guaranteed the communication of all the blessings purchased by Messiah, to the nations of the earth ? There is to them an insoluble mystery, which will never disappear till they consent to recognize the solution afforded by the Gospel.

SECTION E.

OUR third proposition is that Christ came to save THE WORLD by restoring harmony between God and sinners. We have shown that he was not merely one in a succession

of prophets, but the One to whom all the prophets testify. We have shown that his mission had reference to all nations. What we have now to show is that he came to save mankind by bringing them into harmony with God. Not merely to enlighten men ; not merely to be a teacher ; but to be a new Adam to humanity, one in whom the curse consequent on sin is abrogated and thus a way opened up for man's reunion with God. It was of course necessary that men should recognize him as a teacher, in order that they might learn from him the truth as to his own character and as to the nature of his work. But men are not brought into harmony with God by a fuller statement of God's will concerning them. Some take the view that Christ's distinction is simply this, that in him we have a fuller revelation of God's will regarding man. We have this and we have much more. To give us merely a profounder sense of our obligation, is just showing that we are much more hopelessly in debt than we supposed we were. To show Simon the Pharisee that he owes not merely fifty pence but five hundred, not merely five hundred pence but ten thousand talents, may be a very important matter, but merely to do that would be to overwhelm him with the consciousness of his spiritual ruin, and agonize him with the perception of the dreadful chasm between himself and God. The Gospel comes to multitudes who fancy that all is right between their souls and God, and it begins by robbing them of this peace ; it sets up the true standard of the divine requirements, and the result is conscious antagonism of their spirits towards God. Sin being what it is, God, being holy and just, cannot be reconciled to man, and man cannot be reconciled to God. The grand question is this, How can reconciliation be restored between God and man ? Not certainly by God's condoning all the violations of his law, and consenting that men shall pursue the broad road and reach heaven by it. God cannot change ; man must

change, if there is to be harmony. What is needed is that men shall be saved from themselves. To accomplish this, Christ came into the world. Let us look at the proof of this.

Jesus said : I am not come to condemn the world, but to save the world. I am the bread that came down from heaven to give life unto the world. I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the light of the world ; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. The light of life means life-imparting light. In him was life and the life was the light of men. The Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into his hand ; he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not on him shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. Ye will not come unto me that ye may have life. All things are delivered unto me of my Father. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they should know thee, the only True God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven. To bring about a condition of things in which men on earth shall do the will of God here as it is done in heaven, is to bring man into harmony with God and save him from himself. His very name was given that he might save his people from their sins.

How then did he propose accomplishing this great work of reconciliation between God and man ? This brings us to our fourth proposition.

4. All through his ministry, he contemplated HIS OWN DEATH as a necessary means of accomplishing salvation for mankind.

Remembering the part played by the lamb in Jewish sacrifices, it is significant that John the Baptist should have designated him as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. At the very beginning of Christ's ministry, at Jerusalem, Jesus said to the Jews, Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up. The evangelist adds, He spake of the temple of his body. But altogether without ambiguity, in the conversation with Nicodemus, is brought out the fact that Jesus expected to accomplish the great work committed to him by dying.

"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life." John iii. 14.

Here then, at the very beginning of our Lord's ministry, we have a direct reference to his own death as a means of procuring salvation to men. He skips over the whole period of his ministry, the three years in which he went about as a teacher, bringing into clear and unrivalled prominence his death upon the cross, and strongly suggesting that the elevation of the brazen serpent by Moses was simply a type of this grander event. Afterwards when the Pharisees demanded of him a sign, he said :

"There shall no sign be given to this generation but the sign of the prophet Jonah ; for as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be in the earth." In the sixth chapter of John, all that he says about giving his flesh for the life of the world, refers to his death.

In the last year of Christ's ministry he began more frequently and expressly to make mention of his approaching death.

“From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed and be raised the third day. And he spake that saying openly.” Matt. xvi. 21, Mark viii. 31.

Peter remonstrated with him for the use of language that would tend to discredit his divine mission in the minds of the people, and was himself severely rebuked for the spirit of expediency. And our Lord proceeded to intimate the manner of his death, in the following words :

“Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”

Afterwards occurred the Transfiguration when Moses and Elijah conversed with Christ about the decease he should accomplish at Jerusalem. Jesus charged his disciples to say nothing of this glorification of him, until he should be risen from the dead. All showing that Christ came specially and consciously to save men by dying for them, and considered the entire virtue of all that he did and said during his life-time to hinge upon this and to be dependent on this. And herein most signally and conspicuously Jesus Christ differs from all who ever lived upon this earth. All other envoys from heaven delivered their message and fulfilled their task, and thus served their generation. But the entire ministry of our Lord was a kind of parable, an enigma, depending upon his death and resurrection, for its solution.

It is unnecessary to particularize the frequent references to his death made by Christ, from this time onward. We just mention one incidental allusion to it. When Mary the sister of Lazarus anointed him with ointment, he said, This

will do for my burial. Implying that he was shortly to be put to death, and that his disciples would not have the usual opportunity of embalming his body.

SECTION F.

OUR fifth proposition is the following :

Death is the extinction of personal influence and power as regards this world, and this would be pre-eminently true in the case of Jesus Christ. His death would indeed be the annihilation of his cause.

To judge rightly of this matter, we must put away the ideas that have come to us through the resurrection of Christ and through the work of the Holy Spirit poured out by the ascended Saviour. A careful study of the Gospels brings nothing more prominently to view than the fact that the apostles were altogether dependent upon their Master. They could not stand alone. Take away Christ from them and they become immediately fishermen, tax-gatherers and the like. Even when our Lord sent them before his face to announce his coming, to preach and to work miracles, what emboldened them was the fact that Christ was close at hand and that the country was full of his fame, and especially the commission to work miracles in his name. They were upborne by the prestige of that name. But when our Lord was gone up to the mount of Transfiguration, those who were left behind, not knowing where Christ had gone or why, were troubled, and when the demoniac youth was brought to them to be healed, it became evident that their faith had failed. It was always Christ who met the opposers, the lawyers, the Scribes, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Herodians, the rulers of the syna-

gogue ; it was only Christ that could answer the citations from Scripture, explain their true meanings and bring out the testimony of Scripture to himself. Throughout the ministry of Christ the contest was between him, singlehanded, and those who were in places of authority and influence ; the disciples were simply spectators. Deeply conscious of this themselves, they could not bear the allusions of Christ to his death. ' Far be this from thee,' was the language that rose naturally to their lips at the least suggestion that Christ should be taken from them.

To make this matter perfectly clear, we have only to look at the disciples when Christ allows his enemies to get possession of his person. As soon as it became evident to them that Jesus would not use his power to rebuke his enemies, and that he was actually in their hands like a helpless prisoner, they became weakness itself. The feeling of their own danger absorbed them utterly and they fled, leaving the master who had been their guide for years, in the hands of his deadly foes. Afterwards Peter basely denies his Master, apprehending nothing so much as that men shall suppose him to have been one of the companions of the man of Galilee. No one of them gets courage to come forward on the day of crucifixion and acknowledge the bond that had so long existed between him and Jesus. When Christ is on the cross, they are timidly huddled together at a distance. They venture not to present a petition even for the body. Joseph of Arimathea, being a rich and influential man, not professedly a disciple of Christ, and the cause of Christ being now virtually at an end, can ask for the body without seriously compromising himself. The apostles withdraw from the scene as soon as Jesus is dead, leaving two of the women to note what is done with the body. For fear of the Jews they make fast the place where they abide. During the ministry of their Lord they had constantly seen

him saving himself from the hands of his opponents, and baffling all their attempts to arrest him, and they were utterly unprepared for such an event as the successful seizure of his person. This filled them with consternation. It really seemed as though God from heaven had acknowledged the leaders of the Jews to be right in their opposition to Jesus of Nazareth, and as though Providence declared him to be indeed the impostor they had alleged him to be. Jesus had spoken to them of his death, but it was impossible for them to conceive of his death as other than the extinction of his cause. The idea of their taking up the interrupted plan of Christ and carrying it forward when the enemies of Christ had obtained such a complete victory over him in the eyes of all the people, was supremely ridiculous. Doubtless they remembered a great many beautiful things that Christ had said, but what could they do with these in the face of such a tremendous fact as this, that he who uttered them professed to be the Saviour of the world and yet died ignominiously at the hands of the public authorities? If they stood up to preach, what could they say? Jesus had indeed spoken of a resurrection; but of what value was such a promise? All the promises had been crucified with him. If there had been any power left in Jesus, he would have put it forth before his death and come down from the cross. They could take no other view of the matter than this; the promise of a resurrection only appeared like an additional mockery of their past hopes. And we find that the testimony of the women and others to the fact of the resurrection encountered in them an almost invincible unbelief. Not almost, but quite invincible, so far as the testimony of others was concerned. Nothing less than the actual sight of him could overcome it. This then was their state of mind. It fully establishes our opinion, that the death of Christ was the extinction of his cause. It was so in the eyes of his enemies, and it was so in those of his disci-

ples. All that remained of their former faith finds expression in the words: "We thought it had been he who should have redeemed Israel." To revive the cause of the crucified Jesus, a greater than Christ was needed; that is to say, Christ, clothed with greater spiritual power than he had exercised during his ministry, must live again upon the earth. All that remains of his wonderful ministry is this handful of Galileans who are as sheep without a shepherd, filled with fear and confusion and compassed about by those who have triumphed over their Master. Imagine Peter or John in these circumstances standing forth in Jerusalem to preach over again the remembered words of Jesus! The hypothesis is exposed by its own absurdity.

SECTION G.

OUR sixth proposition is this :

While Christ ever contemplated his own death as a necessary means of accomplishing the object of his mission, he always connected resurrection with his death, in terms that imply that all the work of his life would be nullified without it ; making the hope of eternal life to be buried with him and resurgent with him.

Familiarity blinds us to what is most marvellous. In all history where can we find anything to correspond with what we here predicate of Christ, that he should have spent the whole of his wonderful life in preparation for something that would not be accomplished until after he was dead? He was every hour exercising divine power, but exercising it in a way that seemed to his disciples almost like a burial of it ; healing sick people, mostly the poor, casting out devils, sometimes raising the dead, but performing these

works for the most part in obscure places, quietly, unobtrusively, never taking the least trouble to arrange matters so that there should be an appreciative audience, a company of great and learned men to witness his work. 'His brethren on one occasion remonstrated with him, saying: "There is no man that doeth anything in secret, but he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, show thyself to the world." His disciples were eager for him to put forth his power in such a way as to possess himself of the reins of Government; but very soon Jesus sought to make them understand that before the full exercise of the powers that belonged to him as Saviour of mankind, it was necessary that he should abnegate his power and die by the hands of his enemies and be raised again from the dead. Now let the mind dwell upon this; here was one living an extraordinary life, exercising such power as no man had ever done, looked up to by multitudes who expected from him the establishment of a kingdom, and yet it is in his mind all the time that he must, in the eyes of men, suffer total defeat, to the point of being put to a most ignominious death, and only after that be in a position to accomplish his great work.

The proof of our proposition is abundant. At the beginning of his ministry, he said to the Jews in the temple, 'Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it again,' speaking of the temple of his body. He that spake as never man spake, used no idle words, and was far from the folly of supposing that the Jews would destroy the beautiful temple in which they gloried, to see if he had power to raise it again. Immediately after, he said to Nicodemus, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up." When the Pharisees asked him for a sign from heaven, he said, "there shall no sign be given but the sign of the prophet Jonah; as Jonah was

three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and nights in the heart of the earth." The reference to Jonah carried with it the implication that the Son of Man should arise from the dead, and do a great work among the Gentiles afterwards. Turn to John vi. At the beginning it is said that the Jews' Passover was at hand. In a retired country place Jesus fed a multitude numbering many thousands with five barley loaves (flat cakes) and two small fishes, and the remaining fragments filled twelve baskets. The people were convinced that he was the promised One and wished to proclaim him their king, there and then. A king that would miraculously supply all their temporal needs, could defend them from all assaults, and such a king suited them well. But he withdrew from them and afterwards, in the synagogue at Capernaum, he pointed out the spiritual significance of the miracle. It was to lead them to look to him as the bread of life, come down from heaven to give life unto the world. I am the living (life-giving) bread that came down from heaven ; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever ; and the bread that I shall give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. The plain meaning of this is that Christ came down from heaven to this world to restore to mankind that which was forfeited by the sin of Adam, to give them life instead of that death which sin entailed ; and that it would be necessary that he should die in order that men might receive this life, this salvation. The feast of the passover familiarized the Jews with an instance in which the sacrifice of life had been the means of saving life ; the blood of the slain lamb, sprinkled on the door-posts, saved the inmates from the sword of the avenging angel ; and the flesh of the animal thus slain was eaten by the inmates. This was emphatically a prophecy, reiterated for 1500 years by all the families of Israel, of the death of the Lamb of God for sinners, and of the necessity of an appropriation of the

benefits purchased by that death, by faith. Christ made it plain to all who were willing at all to consider, that he did not intend to be taken literally when he spoke of the eating of his flesh, for he says, I will raise him up in the last day, implying that he would live on. "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up again at the last day." Some even of Christ's disciples found this a hard saying; Jesus said to them: "What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascended up where he was before? It is the Spirit that quickeneth." Thus, he not only intimates that he is to die but he is to rise again. In chapter viii. of the same Gospel, Christ is heard in the temple at Jerusalem crying with a loud voice: If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink; and out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this, we are told, said he of the Spirit which they who believed on him should receive. When? After his death and resurrection: "for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, for Jesus was not yet glorified." He here undertakes to satisfy the soul-thirst of all mankind, if they will come unto him; but it is to be accomplished by his death and resurrection. What are we to make of the wonderful words of Christ, 'If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death?' If Jesus were not the resurrection and the Life, how could he promise victory over the last enemy? In chapter x. he says distinctly, "I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring and there shall be one fold. I have power to lay my life down and have power to take it again." Notice the expression in chapter xii. 24: "except a corn of wheat fall into the ground it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." His promise to the Apostles was, "I will send the Holy Spirit to you from the Father;" implying that he was to ascend up to the Father. Not

ambiguously, but in so many words did Christ say to his disciples that he was going to Jerusalem to be rejected and crucified, to rise on the third day. Mat. xvi. 21 ; xx. 18-19. How frequently does our Lord speak of his future advent in glory, implying that he was to ascend up first. In the parable of the vineyard let out to husbandmen, Mat. xxi., the son is represented as put to death. Did our Lord add anything to convey the idea that he would rise again? He did : "The stone which the builders rejected is made the head of the corner ; whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken ; but on whomsoever *it shall fall*, it will grind him to pieces." The parable of the marriage-supper, and other parables, show plainly that Christ fully anticipated the breaking down of the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, and the proclamation of the Gospel among all nations ; but it is very certain that he took not a single step in this direction except as he by dying for the sins of the world provided a scheme of salvation that rendered the Jewish system null. On the mount of transfiguration Moses and Elijah were present and conversed with Christ ; what was their conversation about? They spoke of the decease that he should accomplish at Jerusalem. Need we cite anything more to prove our proposition that Jesus, all through his earthly ministry, not only spoke of his own death as a necessary means of accomplishing salvation for mankind, but of his resurrection and ascension in terms that imply that all the work of his life would be null without it.

SECTION H.

WE come now to our seventh proposition :

"As a matter of fact, when Christ died, his personal influence and power died with him, and those who had been

in closest attendance upon him, all through his ministry, were utterly and hopelessly incapable as regards the Christianizing of men."

The proof of this proposition has been given in what we said respecting the fifth proposition. But perhaps we may get a better impression of the facts of the case, if we figure to ourselves what would occur in one of those Galilean homes where Jesus had often tarried, and where he was held in highest reverence and regard. Here is a house in Cana of Galilee, the same where Jesus had been present at a marriage, and wrought his first miracle. The father and mother and daughter had not been able to attend the feast of the Passover in Jerusalem, but the two sons had gone, and they were now awaiting the return of these. The father says: "I have this day seen a man who told me that if Jesus of Nazareth should present himself in Jerusalem at this feast, the authorities were determined to arrest him and put him to death. In fact they have already set as it were a price upon his head, having given commandment that if anybody knew where he was he should give information that he might be arrested, for they were determined not to let him any longer be at large. I could but smile when I heard this, knowing that our Jesus has power to baffle all their machinations. I remember too well that day at Nazareth when the chief men were determined that he should be thrown down from the precipice, and when he so easily and quietly passed from their hands. It was only last week that we heard of his raising Lazarus from the dead, under the very eyes almost of the authorities of Jerusalem, and it seems to me preposterous that men should think of taking possession of his person." One of the sons arrives at this moment from Jerusalem; he exclaims, "I bring you strange tidings. Jesus of Nazareth, whom you call the Christ, has been arrested by the rulers of Jerusalem, tried by the Sanhedrim, condemned to

death, and then brought before the Roman Governor, who sentenced him to be crucified, and he has actually been crucified between thieves." "Impossible," exclaim the others, "He that had power over the elements and evil spirits and the grave even, how should he allow the Jewish priests to seize him, and the Roman soldiers to crucify him?" "Well," says the son, "how it could be, I know not; but I know that he has been put to death, for I myself saw him upon the cross. You must remember that all along, the scribes and those who were competent to speak about religion, assured us that Jesus was not the Christ, and that it was a great mistake to believe upon him. I knew all along that his power would fail some time." "I never will believe," says the daughter, "that our dear friend Jesus whom I have known these ten years, was capable of deception. After he had multiplied the loaves, he said: I am the bread of heaven come down from heaven to give life unto the world; and I know perfectly that there was never any guile in his mouth, and that he would never pretend to any power that he did not possess." "What matters it what you think," says the brother; "the men who know the Scriptures, the religious rulers appointed by God to lead us, they have all along declared that he was not what he claimed to be." "But my son," says the mother, "where is your brother? He was always more favourable to Jesus than you were." "I left him behind, plunged in grief; he wanted to wait a little longer." The ruler of the synagogue comes in. He says: "I understand that you have brought some strange news from Jerusalem about that Jesus of Nazareth. What is it?" He is told, and then bursts out with the words, "You cannot say that I did not warn you of your folly in trusting to this Jesus. You knew well that all the scribes and priests rejected his claims and insisted that his mighty works were wrought by the aid of evil spirits. At length the vanity of his pretensions are exposed." The

father then says : " I have heard him preach very many times and have had conversations with him, and have seen his manner of life, and I cannot bring myself to believe that he was a deceiver." " Why then," says the ruler, " did God abandon him to the hands of the enemies ? Why were they allowed to put him to death ? What do all his fine words amount to, in view of such a fate as has befallen him ? If God had not been on the side of the rulers, they would never have been able to seize this man and put him to an ignominious death." Many of the neighbours come in and hear the news, and some of them are shocked, for they had really expected that Jesus would prove himself to be the Christ in the eyes of all. But they now sit confounded ; the facts are such that it is impossible to say a word. Then the other brother arrives. He confirms the sad intelligence. " Yes, my dear parents, Jesus is dead, and would that I had died before ever I witnessed such a catastrophe. I saw him buried and a seal set upon his sepulchre. I left Jerusalem at break of day immediately after the Sabbath. The apostles and Mary and the other disciples were all in consternation, fearing that the Jews would seize them too. But the nails that went through the hands and feet of the man of Nazareth went through the hearts of all who believe on him, making their faith to be a powerless thing. I feel as if all the glory were gone out of life." A neighbour says to him : " It is natural that you should feel sad, you have so often stood up for Jesus when others told you that he could not be the one that should deliver Israel. I am told that when he entered Jerusalem the other day, a great multitude came out to meet him proclaiming him to be the Deliverer of Israel ; but they were grievously disappointed ; for instead of taking to himself the power which they expected he would, he went on quietly as he had done all along. Two years ago when the people wanted to make him king, he withdrew himself from them. This is now explained ; he

was sensible that he, the mere son of a Nazarene carpenter, could never undertake to administer the affairs of the country. A man who cannot save himself from the hands of his enemies, is certainly not the one to save others." And no one in the house could deny the force of this.

Thus when we allow our minds to dwell upon the effect of his death, we see that when Jesus was crucified, all his words were crucified with him and his cause was crucified with him. What use could any one make of the remembered words of the crucified One, in view of the fact that he had suffered at the hands of the public executioner?

SECTION I.

Our eighth proposition is this :

"The resurrection of Christ was to the Apostles and other disciples life from the dead, and life in a higher and fuller and more potent sense than they had ever dreamed of."

They had known something of life. When accompanying the Lord Jesus from place to place, they had hourly witnessed the display of his mighty power in healing the diseases of men, and gladdening each successive place with benedictions such as no man could have bestowed ; it had been their privilege to hear rapturous expressions of gratitude fall from the lips of those whose children or parents, wives or husbands, sisters or brothers had been healed ; they had enjoyed the friendship of him who spake as never man spake, and in his wondrous wisdom and matchless kindness had recognized the glory of their Father in heaven ; they had even been commissioned to perform the same miracles

of healing and of mercy, and had seen the devils subject unto them ; was not this, for fishermen, a marvellously exalted life ? But they had dreamed of something beyond this. They had conceptions of the kingdom of Christ that was yet to be, that caused them to look forward to the future with ardent longings. Yet the resurrection of Christ introduced them to a life that made them forget these dreams, or dismiss them as exceeded by the present reality. Let us explain. If the resurrection of Christ had been simply his restoration to such life as he had had before his crucifixion, if he had risen from the dead to abide with his disciples physically, it would not have had the glorious significance that really belongs to it. Christ would still have been in bondage to the laws of space, forbidding him to be present with more than one company of his disciples, and separated even from them by the barrier of flesh that more or less separates all creatures from one another. Christ had already accomplished the work which his heavenly Father had given him to do in the outer world ; what was now needed was the power of God in the inner man. The way had been laid down ; what was necessary was the strength to walk therein. The resurrection of Christ was but the first step on his way from death to the throne of God, there to bestow on sinners of a mortal race the purchase of his death. This is what we mean by the resurrection of Christ. It was God's testimony to his life, his teaching and his death as propitiatory, and was the announcement that the kingdom of heaven is open to all believers, inasmuch as it is open for the communication of the Spirit of God to men.

It was the morning of the day after the Jewish Sabbath. The full moon was just setting in the West, and in the East there was the first glimmer of the coming day. The Apostles were awake early. It was time for them to be

returning to Galilee, and they would have been on their way thither bright and early, but for the fact that Jesus was in the tomb, and they had not heart to leave the vicinity, though conscious enough that they were exposed to bad treatment from those who had put their Master to death. If their unbelief had suffered them to remember the words of Christ regarding his death and resurrection, they would in that case have left Jerusalem; for he had appointed to meet them in Galilee. The arrangements of the Master were disturbed by their want of faith. Well, at the break of day, there is an earthquake rupturing the seal that had been put upon the stone door of the sepulchre. The angel of the Lord appeared at the same time and removing the door, sat upon it. Though but a servant of Jesus, his countenance is resplendent with a supernatural lustre, and his raiment is transfused with the glory of his person. That visible glory which the Lord declined for himself, he bestows upon those that minister unto him. The keepers were appalled; as soon as they had in a measure recovered themselves, they fled into the city. The women of Galilee were early at the tomb, and Mary Magdalene hastens back to inform Peter and John that the body of Jesus was not in the tomb. She had not seen the angel. The other women entering into the tomb, see an angel there; and either there or outside another; who inform them that Christ has risen according to his own prophecy. When returning in haste and excitement, Jesus himself meets them and sends a message to his brethren that they should go into Galilee. They had not faith for this; in fact they rejected the announcement that Jesus had risen from the dead. They of course could not believe that these women had willingly told them an untruth; but they concluded that there must have been some mistake. It has always been a problem for unbelief, to account for the testimony borne by those whose trustworthiness is unimpeachable; and as modern unbelievers have dealt with

the testimony, so the Apostles dealt with it. They attributed it to some mistake caused by excitement and hope. How unlikely that our Master would have appeared to the women before appearing to us. Are they his Apostles? Their imaginations have deceived them. Peter and John however do visit the sepulchre, to ascertain if his body is really missing. To their surprise it is not there, and the grave-clothes are laid there in an orderly way, showing that the removal has not been effected by rude and sudden violence. Strange; passing strange; but we have seen in the last day or two such things as we thought utterly impossible; we have supped full of horrors; we have seen the mightiest of men suffering death like the meanest of malefactors. Jesus being dead, it does not matter very much what becomes of his body, though we should have liked to show it the last rites of respect. Then Mary sees the Master near the Sepulchre. She did not at first know him. Prophecy tells us that the face of the Saviour was so marred, more than any man's; rude hands had plucked out his beard; he had been scourged; his physical strength was so reduced that it became necessary to lay the end of the cross-beam borne by him on another. He would not return to the world just as he left it, for that would have been to bring back all the marks and insignia of death and shame. No; his resurrection was to the fulness of physical life, with the emaciation and the weariness and pallor and sorrow of the past days buried forever in the sepulchre. He is the Resurrection and the Life, and the disciples were to see in him what their promised resurrection would be. There was necessarily a change in the appearance, sufficient to prove the faith of his own. Many a son has returned to the maternal mansion after many years and the mother even could not recognize in the bearded and stalwart person before her, the stripling from whom she had parted years before; but the identification is not difficult, and

once effected, the mother has never again the shadow of a doubt. Jesus afterwards appeared to Peter, as Paul tells us in his epistle to the Corinthians. But this fact is nowhere mentioned in the Gospels. If Peter had been brought to believe that Christ had risen by the testimony of another, it is not impossible that his mind would have been overwhelmed with a sense of his sin in having so basely denied the Lord of glory, and he would have felt like burying himself forever, rather than meet the glance of Christ; he might even have been led to do some desperate thing, like Judas. Our Lord therefore made haste to meet him, and at the same moment that he manifested himself as alive from the dead he let him know that his sin was not beyond the reach of pardon. This interview was of the highest importance for Peter, but it was not necessary that in the rapid sketch of the events of this day given in the Gospels it should have a place. Now at last a breach has been made in the strong entrenchments of unbelief of the Apostolic band. But it would appear that even as the others with Peter had rejected the testimony of the women, so the ten rejected the testimony of Peter. It is simply impossible. Why did he not use his power in coming down from the cross? What is the use of power when all the mischief has been done and the enemy have had a complete victory? By dying he has brought everlasting confusion on his cause. Suppose he came alive to-day, what could he do more than he has already been doing, and it is over that power that his enemies have triumphed. The time is gone by forever, when he could have established his title to be obeyed by all. Thus it appeared to the disciples. In fact, faith in Christ was connected with a living Christ, and when Christ submitted to death and entered the grave, faith went into the tomb with him. Some grain of faith had continued hidden in a corner of Peter's heart according to the prayer of the Saviour; but take the

apostles as a body, unbelief was never more enthroned in any modern skeptic than it was in their hearts. After that, Jesus appeared to two disciples who seem to have taken their departure from Jerusalem, proposing to return to their homes. At first their eyes were holden that they should not know him! our Lord wished that they should first do honour to the word of God, by believing on its testimony that the death of Jesus was a necessary preliminary to his glory.

SECTION J.

WE have not yet said all we wanted to under the eighth proposition, that the resurrection of Christ was to the disciples life from the dead in a fuller, higher, more potent sense than they had ever dreamed of.

On the evening of the first day of the week, the eleven, or rather the ten, for Thomas was not present, were taking their evening meal together. It was in Jerusalem and for all we know may have been in the same room in which our Lord had eaten the passover with them three days before. The doors were fastened for fear of the Jews; they could not be sure but that the authorities might think it prudent to seize them. Simon Peter has just been endeavouring to convince the others that Jesus had risen, telling them that he had himself seen him. James says: "Peter, it seems to us more reasonable to conclude that you are under an illusion in this matter. It may have been an ocular deception. Having heard the story of the women who imagined they had seen him, you went to and fro expecting to see him and greatly desiring it, because of the deep grief in which you have been plunged since Thursday night, and your ardent feelings have combined with some special circumstances to make you believe that you had met him. Your

mind is somewhat disordered by grief." "But do I not know my Master, my Lord, whom I have followed these three years and more? Is it likely that I would be deceived by my senses? I saw him; I spoke with him: he touched me." "Oh it must have been his spirit," said Philip. Peter answered, "Do you remember that night on the Sea of Galilee when we were toiling in rowing, and Jesus came to us upon the water? We all thought it was a spirit; but it turned out to be Jesus himself. And it was not in thick darkness but under the light of the sun that I saw Jesus to-day."—A knock is heard at the door. One goes and makes enquiry who is there, and presently the door is opened cautiously to admit the two disciples who had just returned from Emmaus. Cleopas says: "We have important and cheering news to give you. To-day we were on our way to Emmaus when the Master joined us and accompanied us. At first we did not know him; God hindered us from recognizing him in order that we might first learn from him to understand the Scriptures concerning Messiah. For he brought to our notice several passages of Scripture which plainly teach that the Messiah had to suffer and die for our sins and then rise again. We persuaded him to break bread with us at Emmaus, and while we were eating together, suddenly our eyes were opened and we saw Jesus before us as plainly as we have ever seen him; and then he vanished out of our sight, leaving us filled with joy because of the new light thrown upon the crucifixion. Christ died to save his people from death according to the Scriptures." The others looked at one another. "Will you still doubt?" said Peter. But Andrew said: "Dear brother, do you not see how much there is that is unsatisfactory in the report of these brethren? A strange thing truly that nobody should recognize our Jesus at first! That one should be in his company half an hour and not know him." And John said: "Is it at all likely that he would appear to these brethren

before appearing to us his Apostles? Are we to conclude that he has rejected us from the Apostleship, and refuses to have anything more to do with us? No, I cannot believe that Jesus of Nazareth has risen from the dead; if it were so, he would have come to us immediately." While they are thus speaking they become suddenly aware that Jesus is there in their midst. He had not needed to enter by the door; as he had walked upon the waters, so he miraculously made a way for himself into the chamber where the disciples were. It was fitting that they should begin to learn that Christ was with them always. "Peace be unto you," he says. But they were filled with alarm; they thought it was an apparition. He shows them his hands and his feet, with the marks of the nails that had pierced them; he showed them his side, bearing the mark of the wound made by the spear. They yet believed not for joy, and wondered. It was delightful to think that Christ had risen, but it was too good news to be true; they had drunk such a bitter cup of disappointment, that they shrunk from having their expectations again excited to be dashed again. They had had enough of disappointment. Instead of clutching, as some suppose they naturally would, at any feather of hope to buoy up their sinking spirits, they abhorred the very idea of having anything more to do with hopes that might be dashed to the ground. They refused to believe upon anything less than the most irrefragable proof. We ask particular attention to this state of mind. It is very evident that they were as little disposed to believe in Christ's resurrection as any person could possibly be. Nothing appeared to them more forbidding than the idea of going back to their old hopes and expectations, which had been the means of plunging them in such profound misery. Still, they found it hard to disbelieve the evidence of their senses. Christ sits down with them at their meals, and makes it very evident that he is not a disembodied spirit, not an apparition,

but the Lord himself. And he proceeds to unfold to them the meaning of the prophetical Scriptures, and to explain why it was necessary that he should die on the cross. Now at length the scales fell from their eyes ; the mystery of the Gospel hid from the beginning of the world was now at last unfolded. Something of the glory of the Gospel dispensation began to dawn upon them. They began to perceive that Christ had purchased by his death salvation for sinners of all mankind. He then left them and they did not see him again until the following Sunday. Thomas had refused to believe even the combined testimony of the other disciples, but is not able to refuse the testimony of Christ's actual and visible presence. Afterwards our Lord appeared to the disciples in Galilee, once at the sea side and once on a mountain ; and again in Jerusalem and Bethany, at the time of his ascension. But the great body of the people, with the rulers, were unacquainted with this testimony and were thoroughly persuaded that the cause of Christ was extinct ; if the disciples ventured to move in the matter again, they would soon dispose of them. If perchance one of the disciples chanced to say to any one that Christ had risen from the dead, he was met by derisive taunts ; " Why did he not come down from the cross when he was challenged to ? He has confessed himself inferior to our rulers by dying at their hands. It is too late for you to trump up this story of his resurrection. The thing is transparently absurd. If he had indeed risen from the dead, he would have appeared at once to the rulers and to the world. But he takes good care to keep out of their way. Our eyes have been opened ; these inventions will not go down with us." Conscious of the immense difficulty which they themselves had had in believing, the disciples saw at once how absurd would be the expectation that the rest of the Jews would listen to such a testimony from them. And so our Lord impressed upon them that they would not have power

to witness for him until he should have ascended and poured out his Spirit upon them.

SECTION K.

WE will now couple our eighth and ninth propositions together, and remark upon them.

8. "The resurrection was to the disciples life from the dead, and life in a fuller, higher, more potent sense than they had ever dreamed of." 9. "As the ascension depended on the resurrection, so the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost and thenceforward depended on the ascension."

In a word it is only on the day of Pentecost that we learn what the true significance of the resurrection of Christ is. The resurrection was in fact a part of the ascension, the first step in the ascending path of Jesus from the grave to the throne of God. When our Lord, after his resurrection, first appeared to Mary Magdalene, he told her that she was to tell his disciples that he was ascending to his God and their God, to his Father and their Father. Finally the Apostles saw him bodily ascend to heaven, from the neighbourhood of Bethany, and they returned to Jerusalem with great joy, to carry out his instructions and engage in prayer for the Holy Spirit. Christ had indeed breathed upon them, saying, Receive ye the Holy Spirit; they had been taught that whatsoever was good and true was from the Spirit; yet they were deeply conscious that they were far from being what they needed to be in order that they might go forward with the work of preaching Christ to men of all

nations. A list had been made out of the disciples at that time in Jerusalem, and the names numbered 120, including the women, for they had already learned that in Christ there is neither male nor female. The Apostles seem to have been lodging in an upper room, and the rest of the disciples joined them here in waiting upon God. Mary the mother of Jesus was there, and the brethren of Jesus, those of whom we were told in John vii. 5, that they did not believe on him. Now that he had gone from them, they were enabled to understand a great many things that had appeared to them profoundly mysterious while he was yet with them in the flesh. We can imagine the first prayer-meeting at the close of the day on which Jesus had ascended up in the sight of the Apostles. Gathering all the little flock together in the large upper room, the Apostles tell how he had been taken up from them, in the act of blessing them; and how some angels had appeared to them assuring them that he would in like manner come again. All listen with great eagerness. One of them asks: "Was Thomas present with you, when this took place?" "Yes," says Thomas, "I was there and with my own eyes saw our blessed Lord ascend up, till a cloud hid him from our view." "Would that we had been there," said one of the brethren of Jesus; "but doubtless it was all as it should be." "Yes," said another, "we must abandon the foolish notion that Christ could do anything that was not the best. How often have we preferred our own vain thoughts to those of the Master." "But," says Cleopas, "where is the spot from whence he ascended?" Peter makes answer: "In a retired place not far from Bethany, on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives." The question is asked, "Were there any people in the neighbourhood, witnessing what you saw?" "Verily," says Peter, "I know not. I was so much absorbed in looking at the Master that I could not think of turning to see if there

were any in the adjacent field. I doubt however if any one saw him ascend, besides the little company that were with him." "I have no doubt," says Mark, "that J  sus hath done all things wisely and well; though I should have thought that it would have been a grand thing if our Lord had ascended up in the eyes of the inhabitants of Jerusalem and thus convinced them that they had acted wickedly in crucifying him." John makes answer: "I have heard the Master tell of the way in which he was tempted before he entered on his ministry, after the Holy Spirit had come upon him at the Jordan. He was taken in spirit to the extreme top of the temple minaret, overlooking the valley of Jehoshaphat, at a time when great multitudes were assembled in the temple precincts, and it was suggested to him that he should cast himself down in the sight of every body and by alighting uninjured convince all that he was the Messiah. This is a method of taking captive the minds of men, that would have recommended itself to us, no doubt. But God's thoughts are not as ours, and the Master saw that this was not the right way to go about the work given him to do. The kingdom of God cometh not with observation. Think it over and you will see that only a few persons could be near him when he ascended, to note fixedly the features of the ascending one; if there had been a crowd of persons, the more distant would have denied that it was he. The evidence of the senses is not the highest kind of evidence. Many would have neutralized the evidence of alleged spectators by declaring that it was a phantasm, a ghost. Our Lord will yet give the people of this city evidence of his resurrection. We shall be endued with power from on high, and that power will enable us to convince even his deadliest enemies that he has indeed ascended on high. But O dear friends, let us not lose precious time; let us give ourselves to prayer, in the name of our ascended Lord. He assured us that our

prayers offered in his name, should have a prevailing power. I am eager to prove the full virtue of this blessed name. He told us that it was expedient for us that he should go to the Father, and from all he said, I can but gather that he will help us from on high far more gloriously than ever he did when he was on the earth." They now engage in prayer, one after another. In their prayers are intermingled confessions of their sins in having slighted so often the teaching and example of the Master, and done so many things that must have been a grief to him, with recollections of the gracious words spoken by Christ and of his acts and sufferings. The more they pray, the greater the spirit of prayer that comes upon them. At length there is a pause. One brother recollects some occasion when he spoke unkindly to another brother, and he wishes to acknowledge it and ask pardon for the same. Immediately another remembers that he, not many days ago, indulged in some reflections upon the character of another behind his back; he wishes to state the facts and ask pardon for his offence. Another goes out hurriedly, saying that he had borrowed money from another party and had not fulfilled the promise then made to pay it as soon as he could. Then James makes some remarks upon the necessity of getting right with one's fellow-men before acceptable prayer could be offered to God. He exhorted all who were under obligations of any kind to fulfil these at once, because God hath said that if any man turn away his ear from hearing the law, his prayer shall be abomination, and that only he who confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall prosper. Prov. xviii. 9, 13.

"I charge you therefore, beloved brethren and sisters, to see to it before we come together again, that we have met our engagements, paid our debts, forgiven our enemies, humbled ourselves before those we have wronged in any

way, and, so far as may be, established peace with all. Remember what our Lord said : If thy hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee."

SECTION L.

WHEN the disciples came together on the day after the ascension of their Master, the countenances of some of them were more cheerful than they had previously been. They told how the Saviour had enabled them to do things which they never thought they could do. One of them who had become involved by standing surety for another, had sold his little all and relieved himself of the obligation. What is this Peter tells us ? ' I met last evening a woman whom I recognized as one whom I had seen in the court of the high priest's palace on that eventful night, and I said to her, I told you an untruth that night when you accused me of being a follower of Jesus of Nazareth ; under the influence of a base fear of man I denied that I was his disciple : I was guilty of a base falsehood and have been day and night since then weeping because of my wicked denial of the worthiest of masters. I then left her, but I felt relieved by the fact that I had been enabled to acknowledge to her my fault.' They now gave themselves to prayer, and for hours continued therein. As the Apostles prayed, the words that the Master had addressed to them the night when he had eaten the passover with them, came to their remembrance, and mingled with their supplications. ' Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do.' ' I will pray the Father and he will give you another Comforter.' ' If a man love me he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him.' ' Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.' ' The Spirit of truth will guide you into all truth.' ' Hitherto have ye

asked nothing in my name ; ask and receive, that your joy may be full.' ' Holy Father, keep through thine own name those that thou hast given me, that they may be one.' ' That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them and I in them.' They would then break off, and give themselves to the searching of the Scriptures. They were astonished to find in the Psalms, in the prophets, and in the books of Moses even, so much that they had never understood till now. It seemed to them as though they were now first becoming acquainted with those Scriptures which had been their boast all along. After this, they spent some time in trying to refresh one another's memories in respect to the words of Christ, addressed to them before his death and his resurrection. One remembered this and another remembered that ; and if there was something they could not accurately remember, it generally came to them in prayer. Day after day they came together thus, and continued in prayer ; and instead of growing weary in prayer, it seemed that every day they were more absorbed in it than they had been the day before. They were deeply and bitterly conscious of their personal inability to go forward with the great work which the Master had committed to them, without some experience of his power in them surpassing anything they had yet known. They did not clearly see how the Spirit of God could endue such natures with power to go forward against the powers of this world ; they could not yet see how carnal men were to be awed and controlled by spiritual power ; but it struck them that the Spirit of God would probably have such power over their own spirits as the Master had exercised over the bodies of men. They felt wonderfully drawn to one another ; the thought ' which of them should be greatest ' no longer betrayed itself. As the day of Pentecost drew nigh, the thought struck some of them that possibly it would please God to grant them on that day, the great blessing promis-

ed. Fifty days after the Paschal lamb had been slain in Egypt, the law was given from Sinai. Why should not the glorious dispensation of the Gospel begin on that day?

Early on the morning of the day of Pentecost the disciples were all with one accord in the house where they had been holding their daily meetings, when suddenly there was a sound like that which a mighty wind would make, and tongues of fire were seen resting on the head of each one of them. So much by way of external manifestation. But best of all each found himself and herself filled with the Holy Spirit, and became conscious that a divine, omnific Spirit was present in their minds, so that they were able to speak in strange tongues which they had never learned. In no other way could the presence of this divine Spirit in them have been so unequivocally shown to them. It was essentially the same power that had enabled the prophets to foretell future things of which they themselves had utterly no knowledge, as when David, for instance, in the 22nd Psalm spoke of the crucifixion of Christ. This wonderful event was soon noised abroad, and it was not long before a great multitude had gathered about the house. Then, with exceeding joy, the disciples went forth and addressed them in the various languages spoken by the Jews and proselytes there gathered from all parts of the Roman world. The love of God was powerfully shed abroad in the hearts of the disciples, and they realized as they had never done before their vital union with the Lord Jesus. All power in heaven and in earth belonged to him, and it belonged to them by virtue of their union with him. There was not the slightest room in their hearts for the fear of man. They unhesitatingly charged the people of Jerusalem with having put to death the Messiah, the Lord of glory, and pointed out that God was this day giving evidence to men that Jesus was at the right hand of the Most High. An immense

number are convicted of sin and *three thousand* stand forth to witness that day to the risen Jesus by openly confessing him as the Messiah, the Saviour. It was not merely that they were swayed by some strange excitement to acknowledge Christ on this occasion ; but they gave the best possible expression of their faith, by the complete revolution effected in their lives and sentiments. The mind that was in Christ was in them ; and it seemed as though for one Christ that the Jews had put away, there were thousands filling Jerusalem with their fearless and unimpeachable testimony.

SECTION M.

OUR tenth proposition is this :

“Without the physical, visible resurrection of Christ, there could have been no Christian Church in Jerusalem, no evangelization of the nations, no Acts of the Apostles and no Epistles to the churches planted by them ; no New Testament, no Lord’s Day, no church of Christ.”

It is very certain, and it is not a point that any intelligent person will dispute, that the Gospel which was preached by the first disciples was one that awoke the profoundest antagonism of the Jews. The Pharisees could bear the Sadducees, and the Sadducees the Pharisees ; both of these divisions could bear the Herodians, and the Herodians could bear them ; nay the Pharisees could bear the Publicans and the Publicans the Pharisees ; the Grecians and the Hebrews, the Jews by descent and the proselytes and the devout men among the Romans, all these classes could exist together without a rent in the fabric of society ; but for those who declared that the crucified Jesus of

Nazareth had been raised by God from the dead and thus declared the Messiah, there could be no toleration. To say this was to say that the sacred Council of the Jews with the High-priest at their head, and with the support of the entire priesthood, scribes, lawyers and all doctors of religion, had committed the unheard-of sin of rejecting the Anointed Deliverer, the Messiah promised from the foundation of the world, and had constrained the Roman authorities to treat him as the vilest malefactor and put him to a miserable death. To assert that God had come forth to proclaim them murderers and traitors by raising Jesus from the dead, was to make even a more deadly attack upon the religious leaders, upon the people and upon the state, than Jesus of Nazareth himself had ever made. If they had not tolerated Jesus himself, it is plain that they would not tolerate his Galilean followers daring to charge them with the most fearful of all crimes. In the nature of things, it was inevitable that they who preached the Gospel to the people of Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, were very much in the position of lambs lifting up their voices against an immense herd of rabid wolves. What enabled them to do it? We have seen what they were in themselves; the idea of their standing up to endeavour to convince their enemies that they had murdered the Prince of Life, and that there was no hope of salvation for them except through the very blood which they had spilt on Calvary, was simply absurd, to the very verge of madness.

Yes, if Christ had not really risen from the dead, these disciples would never themselves have risen from their own spiritual and intellectual ineptitude, would never have dared to speak openly in defence of the crucified One; if they had dared to do it, they would have been at once overwhelmed by the indignation of their fellow-countrymen. Many of his words would linger in the memory of those who had

heard them ; many who had been healed by him would cherish in their hearts some sense of gratitude ; the incidents of his remarkable career would continue to be whispered about ; but if at any time any one ventured openly to assert that Jesus of Nazareth was really what he professed to be, this could only be a signal for the descent of the intensest indignation of the authorities thus by implication charged with a more enormous crime than that which Cain had committed or Satan attempted. Let the reader call to mind the conduct of the parents of the man whose eyes Jesus had opened ; afraid of excommunication, they would not venture a word in favour of him who had given sight to their son blind from birth. If it was so, while Christ was still visibly there with his awe-inspiring presence, much more when Jesus of Nazareth had been arraigned as an impostor, and crucified between thieves. The word that favoured him was a word of high treason against the divinely constituted authorities.

No one who considers these things can doubt that the account given in the Acts of the Apostles of the implacable hostility of those that bore rule in Jerusalem and of all that were zealous for the Mosaic dispensation in the land, towards those who preached Jesus crucified and risen, is reliable. It could not be that the disciples would be met by any other than such an antagonism.

SECTION N.—(*conclusion*).

THE day of Pentecost is Heaven's answer to the question we are treating. It is heaven's declaration, in the hearing of all the world, that Jesus is the Christ, that he died for the sins of the world and that he was raised again for the

justification of all who believe, Jews or Gentiles. Three thousand men and women stood up to testify, and to seal it with their blood if necessary, that Jesus is the well-beloved Son of God, the only Mediator between God and man. They were the holiest band of witnesses the world had ever seen. Never before had there been a company of men and women so fully delivered from selfishness and from falsehood. No man counted anything his own. Everything was on the altar. Each one loved his neighbour as himself. God had given each one a new heart and a right spirit. A few weeks before and the last thing they would have thought of doing, would have been to go contrary to the will of the scribes, Pharisees, high priests and elders. To be excommunicated was something more to be dreaded than death. They had seen Jesus crucified, and had gone home to their evening meal thankful that that element of trouble was taken away from the community. When afterwards they had passed one of the Galilean followers of Jesus in the street, they had shrunk from him as from impurity incarnate. How marvellous the power of God that had passed over the spirits of these men and women, enabling them to forsake their sins and evil habits, to come forth from the various classes of the community and stand up to testify, in the face of the utmost wrath and contempt of man, that Jesus was the Christ, exalted to the right hand of God, a Prince and Saviour, the only name given under heaven whereby men might be saved. These witnesses are willing to be tested. If they are actuated by the spirit that actuates all other men, it will not be difficult to make them renounce a cause that is costing them so much. Deprive them of the means of support; cover them with opprobrium; mob them; stone them; kill them; hunt them away from Jerusalem. Whatever you do, they abide by their testimony; they cannot lie; they cannot defraud; but they can take joyfully the spoiling of their

goods, and when put to death, can breathe out a prayer for their murderers. Three thousand; a noble band of witnesses truly; and every day, additions are made to their number, until soon the number of the males, not counting females, is 5000, and that of the whole at least 10 or 12,000.

This in Jerusalem. But all over the land, in every city and hamlet, disciples of Christ stood forth in the power of the Spirit to make known the fact of his resurrection. Many of those who were converted in Jerusalem were from other places, and doubtless took an early opportunity of witnessing to their kinsfolk and fellow-townsmen the glad tidings of the risen Saviour. When the Jewish populace became infuriated, at the time when Stephen died, many thought it their duty to withdraw from the violence of persecution in Jerusalem to other parts of the land; and this proved to be only the wider diffusion of their testimony.

Then the Gospel went forth to the Gentiles, and every step of the apostolic progress shows that he who died for the sins of men, was their Leader and Commander. Men were taught that if they believed on the Lord Jesus they would have evidence in their hearts that He was the risen and almighty Saviour; the Spirit of God would come upon them, and make them new creatures in Christ, give them victory over sin and temptation, delivering them from the fear of man, and causing them to be lights in the world, holding forth the word of life. Every where, some proved the matter; and being filled with the Holy Ghost, became in their turn witnesses of Christ's resurrection.

Did Christ rise again? We have heard heaven's affirmative of this,

1. In the fact that Jesus of Nazareth was the One to whom all the earlier prophets testified.

2. In the fact that his mission had distinct reference to mankind at large.

3. In the fact that he came to save the world, and restore harmony between God and an alienated race.

4. In the fact that he constantly spoke of his death as the means by which this would be accomplished.

5. In the fact that his work would have been completely nullified, if there had not been for him an early and unquestionable *resurrection*.

6. In the fact that he understood this perfectly, and always connected *resurrection* with the expected death, hanging all the hopes of his disciples and of the world upon it.

7. In the fact that the period between his arrest and his demonstrated resurrection, was a period of paralysis and death in the history of his cause.

8. In the wonderful change that passed upon the disciples when they came to know assuredly that God had raised him from the dead ; especially (9) when on the Day of Pentecost, the risen and ascended Saviour endued them with power to witness for him.

10. In the unparalleled effects resulting from the outpouring of the Spirit in Apostolic times.

The emphatic affirmation of heaven is given to the question, Did Jesus rise again ? in the fact that there is a Church

of Christ ; in the fact that there is a New Testament ; in the Lord's Day ; in the noble army of martyrs ; in the mighty transformation wrought by the Gospel in the condition of Society ; in the abandonment of idolatry by many nations ; in the signs of decay that meet us in the various other systems that have exercised a spell upon the consciences of men.

It is utterly in vain, it is signally futile for objectors to carry on a war around the few incidents related in the gospels in connection with the forthcoming of Jesus from the sepulchre. We claim a much vaster area for the deploying of our serried proofs ; and believe that no one can seriously and impartially weigh the considerations which we have submitted in this series, without perceiving that there is no more demonstrated fact in history than the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

And now, dear Reader, one friendly word in conclusion. If Jesus Christ really lived, taught, suffered, died, rose again, and ascended to heaven, then he is now at the right hand of God, our accepted Saviour and Mediator, in whom God's propitiousness to our race is so declared that whosoever trustfully pleads his merits shall be accepted, forgiven and saved. This salvation is for you, and nothing in the world concerns you so much as to secure the blessings purchased for you at so great a price. You may soon obtain a blissful demonstration of the things about which we have been speaking, by asking God for Christ's sake to give you his Holy Spirit, that you may be enabled to abandon all other grounds of confidence, and look in faith to him who tasted death for every man, and ever liveth to intercede for all who come unto God by him.

